United Nations S/2002/723

Security Council

Distr.: General
3 July 2002

Original: English

Letter dated 3 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing again to request an open meeting of the Security Council today under the Bosnia and Herzegovina agenda item. There is, and indeed there must be, adequate time for such a debate to take place before the Security Council takes action on this item given the issues of vital interest to all Member States which are involved.

The Security Council has made considerable progress in recent years in making its proceedings more transparent and itself more accountable. For the Council to decide on this case, with its far-reaching implications for the international system, in a debate held only behind closed doors, would be quite inconsistent with the principles that underlay the Security Council's method of work in recent years.

What is at issue in the Council's deliberations of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) item is not just the extension of a United Nations mission that will end in six months time in any case. Rather, the issue is a potentially irreversible decision negatively affecting the integrity of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the integrity of treaty negotiations more generally, the credibility of the Security Council, the viability of international law with respect to the investigation and prosecution of grievous crimes, and the established responsibilities of States under international law to act on such crimes.

It is difficult to imagine an issue on which the appropriateness of the Council's hearing the views of the membership is more compelling.

If the Council were to address itself merely to a further technical rollover or simply terminating UNMIBH in an orderly way, there would be less need for an open debate. If, on the other hand, any attempt will be made to work with a proposal that has the far-reaching consequences referred to above, we view an open debate as crucial.

I therefore again respectfully request that an open debate be held today before any Council vote on anything more far-reaching than the termination of or a technical extension of UNMIBH is held.

I also request that the present letter be circulated immediately to the full United Nations membership as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Paul **Heinbecker**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

02-45823 (E) 050702